

*Faculty of Music
University of Toronto*

Thursday evening series

Czech Nonet

Peter Vanek, violin
Milan Hermanek, viola
Rudolf Lojda, cello
Vaclav Fuka, double bass

Jiri Valek, flute
Karel Lang, oboe
Vaclav Kyzivat, clarinet
Jaroslav Rezac, bassoon
Arnost Charvat, French horn

Assisted by Adele Armin, violin

*Concert Hall, Edward Johnson Building
Thursday, March 15th, 1973
8:30 p.m.*

Dancing Preludes Witold Lutoslawski
Allegro molto
Andantino
Allegro giocoso
Andante
Allegro molto

Lutoslawski's biographer, Ove Nordwall, describes the Polish composer's early works (up to the end of 1954) as a synthesis of the "abstract symphonic" and the "openly folk-music influenced." The Dance Preludes are the last work to which this description applies. (In later years, the composer has utilized a variety of techniques including serialism, aleatory, and speech-composition.

The Preludes were first composed in 1954 for clarinet and piano, and revised the next year for clarinet and string orchestra with harp and percussion. The nonet version is the third revision dating from 1959. Only in this third version does the clarinet relinquish its monopoly of the melody line.

In the first prelude, the vigour produced by staccato articulation, sharp accents, and the alternation of duple and triple metre is broken only once by two lyrical string phrases (marked "dolce" or "sweetly") in the middle of the movement. The pastorate second prelude has a slight poignance created by the cross relation of a major and minor third. A dance-like theme appears in the middle section. Preludes three and five are rhythmically the most complex. In the mid-section of the former, Lutoslawski uses changing metres, rhythmic displacement and syncopation simultaneously. The complexity of the fifth prelude results from the overlapping of two rhythmically independent dance-like themes (first heard in oboe and bassoon). These are actually written in different metres in the first (clarinet and piano) version of the work. Between these two preludes there is a slow movement with a character of pure mystery. To a background of plucked strings and clarinet accents, the horn presents the first repeated notes and chromatic twists of its level melody. Later strings play without vibrato.

The influence of Bartok is evident in the use of some folk-like themes and dance rhythms, and in the presence of vital and sometimes complex metro-rhythmic patterns, polyrhythms, and polymetres.

Serenade in D minor, Opus 44 (arranged for Nonet) Antonin Dvorak
Moderato quasi marcia
Tempo di menuetto
Andante con moto
Allegro molto

In the late 1870's, Dvorak worked on three serenades—works which traditionally consisted of a mixture of symphonic and suite movements designed for outdoor performance. Only Opus 22 in E major for string orchestra and Opus 44 in D minor for winds, violoncello, and contrabass were completed.

The latter, which we are about to hear, was composed very rapidly, between the fourth and eighteenth of January, 1878, performed under the composer's baton by the orchestra of the Czech Provisional Theatre, Prague, in November of the same year, and published in 1879. It is dedicated to Louis Ehlert, the music critic whose favourable reviews of Dvorak's works established his reputation in Germany.

The first movement begins with a march, perhaps reminding us of the outdoor setting for which the traditional genre was intended.

The Menuetto, emphasized by its very position as the second movement rather than the more usual third, contains features of Czech folk dance (elements which come more to the fore in the next opus by Dvorak, the Slavonic Dances). The Menuetto is related to the "sousedska" or "Neighbours Dance", the Trio (by way of its cross accents and Presto tempo) to the "furiat."

The Andante third movement has been considered by several of Dvorak's biographers as the high point of the work. It consists of a clarinet and oboe melody, characterized by a rising fourth (an interval which initiates several other themes in the work), a steadily moving cello and bass line, and syncopated horn chords.

The finale in D minor revives the dance-like character of the opening two movements. As in the string serenade, the main theme of the first movement returns before the Coda. The work then ends with the first finale theme but now transposed to the major mode.

INTERMISSION

Octet in F Major, Opus 166 Franz Schubert

Adagio — allegro

Andante un poco mosso

Scherzo (Allegro Vivace)

Andante (Variations)

Menuetto (Allegretto)

Andante molto-Allegro

A group of chamber works—the octet and two string quartets (in A minor and D minor)—were written after the initial public failure of two dramatic works, *Rosamunde* and *Alfonso und Estrella* and were, according to the composer himself, preparatory exercises for Schubert's "grand symphony" (#1, in C major).

The octet was commissioned by Count Troyez, a clarinetist in the musical establishment of Archduke Rudolph in Vienna. Schubert, no doubt, composed the many clarinet solos, especially the opening theme of the second movement, with his patron in mind.

Like Beethoven's Septet in Eb, Opus 20, which was the model, the octet includes both a scherzo (III) and a minuet (V), a slow movement (II) and a theme and variations (IV) making six movements rather than the more usual four. This form is also reminiscent of the classical divertimento.

Both Beethoven and Schubert began their first and last movements with a slow introduction. Schubert has made the finale introduction especially dark and sombre by writing it in the minor key (F minor) and accompanying the abrupt dotted motive with swelling and subsiding string tremolos. Dotted rhythms also characterize the entire first movement and contrast in their angularity with the gentle melody and accompaniment of the slow second movement.

The even four measure phrases and robust character of the scherzo complements the slower moving violin melody, steady staccato bass and thinner texture of the Trio. Movement four, a set of acrobatic variations on a folk-like theme which Schubert borrowed from his early operetta "Die Freunde von Salamanka", is followed by the second dance movement, a Minuet and Trio.

The sombre introduction to the finale (described above) contrasts with the succeeding march-like Allegro which contains an abundance of counterpoint and some virtuosic passage-work for the first violin. The slow tempo of the introduction returns along with chromatic harmony for one suspense-filled moment before the coda.

After the first public performance of the octet, it was neglected for a quarter of a century when four movements were published in 1853. The whole work was not published until 1875.

NEXT THURSDAY EVENING SERIES: April 5th, 1973
Cleveland String Quartet

NEXT EVENT: Thursday, March 29th, 1973
University of Toronto Concert Band
Conductor, Prof. Robert A. Rosevear